

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8476
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 6146

USIAEA

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SUBJECT: NUCLEAR AND THERMAL ENERGY NOTES

REF: (A) STATE 66911, (B) 77 STATE 254843, (C) 77 LAGOS A-91

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SUMMARY: NIGERIA'S NUCLEAR POWER AMBITIONS DO SEEM TO HAVE BEEN
SHELVED, ALEGEDLY PARTLY BECAUSE OF A FIRM USG POSITION ON
PROVIDING FUEL. DECISIONS MAY BE MADE THIS YEAR ON THREE HYDRO
AND TWO THERMAL PROJECTS OF COMMERCIAL INTEREST, ONE OF WHICH
MIGHT INCLUDE THE WORLD BANK. THE SOURCE FOR MOST OF THE
FOLLOWING IS AN EXPATRIATE EXPERT WITH ACCESS TO NIGERIAN
THINKING IN THIS FIELD. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT FIRST PROPOSED ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO
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IS PROBABLY DEFERRED INDEFINITELY, ALTHOUGH NO FORMAL DECISION
HAS BEEN MADE. THREE FACTORS ARE RESPONSIBLE: (1) PRESIDENT
CARTER ALLEGEDLY TOLD HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO IN WASHINGTON
LAST YEAR THAT THE U.S. WOULD NOT SUPPLY FUEL, INFURIATING
THE WEST GERMANS, WHO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO SELL A REACTOR; (2)
MOTOR COLUMBUS, THE SWISS CONSULTANTS WHO DO EXTENSIVE WORK
FOR THE NATIONAL ELECTRIC POWER AUTHORITY (NEPA), THE COUNTRY'S

ELECTRICITY MONOPOLY, CAME OUT STRONGLY AGAINST IT IN A QUICK STUDY REQUESTED BY THE NEPA GENERAL MANAGER; (3) THE COUNTRY'S DIMINISHED FINANCIAL OUTLOOK WOULD MAKE AN UNECONOMIC PLANT DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY. THE FMG HAS FOR THE TIME BEING MERELY ALLOCATED ABOUT TWO MILLION NAIRA TO IFE AND AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITIES TO CONTINUE STUDYING NUCLEAR POWER. ACCORDING TO A SOURCE CLOSE TO NIGERIAN THINKING, THE HEAD OF STATE WAS CONSIDERABLY SOBERED BY WHAT WAS ALLEGED TO BE THE PRESIDENT'S RATHER BLUNT MESSAGE REGARDING FUEL. THE SOURCE SAID ANOTHER MAJOR POINT FOR NIGERIAN DECISION MAKERS WAS MOTOR COLUMBUS' POINTING OUT THAT NUCLEAR WOULD BE THE ONLY ENERGY SUPPLY DEPENDENT ON OUTSIDE SOURCES. OTHER ARGUMENTS MOTOR COLUMBUS REPORTLY MADE AGAINST THE NUCLEAR ENERGY PLANT WERE ITS LARGE SIZE, OPTIMALLY ABOUT 1,000 MAGAWATTS, IN RELATION TO THE COUNTRY'S PRESENT CAPACITY OF ROUGHLY 800 MEGAWATTS FROM SEVERAL SMALL SOURCES, PLUS THE DIFFICULTY OF OPERATING THIS TECHNOLOGY HERE. RELIANCE ON ONE LARGE PLANT WOULD MAKE NIGERIA TOO VULNERABLE TO A MASSIVE BREAKDOWN. THE SOURCE ESTIMATED THAT NUCLEAR POWER WOULD NOT BE FEASIBLE FOR NIGERIA UNTIL THE 1990'S, SAYING THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT IT IN THE EARLY 1980'S. FINALLY, SOURCE SAID THE SITE STUDIED FOR THE NUCLEAR PLANT, ON THE NORTH SHORE OF LAGOS LAGOON SOUTHEAST OF IKORODU, MAY BE USED FOR A NEW GAS-FIRED THERMAL PLANT FOR LAGOS. END CONFIDENTIAL.

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2. DECISIONS MAY BE MADE THIS YEAR ON FIVE MAJOR ELECTRIC PROJECTS OF INTEREST TO AMERICAN CONSTRUCTORS, EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS, AND IN PART TO THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS.
 - A. "LOMAIK": THIS ACRONYM REFERS TO THREE HYDRO DAMS PROPOSED FOR LOKOJA (NIGER RIVER), MAKURDI (BENUE RIVER) AND IKOM (CROSS RIVER IN SOUTHEAST NIGERIA) (SEE LAGOS A-91, OCT. 12, 1977). AS REPORTED, THESE PROJECTS ARE BEING RECONSIDERED IN LIGHT OF DISCLOSURES THAT THE FIRST TWO WOULD DROWN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS ALREADY UNDERWAY, IN LIGHT OF THEIR LARGE COSTS AND IN LIGHT OF THE CURRENT POWER RATIONING CAUSED BY UNFORESEEN LOW WATER AT THE COUNTRY'S MAIN POWER SOURCE ON THE NIGERI RIVER, KAINJI DAM. AN EXPERT SOURCE SAYS THE DAMS' PROPONENTS HOPE THE CURRENT MILITARY REGIME WILL DECIDE IN FAVOR OF THEM THIS YEAR BECAUSE THE CIVILIAN REGIME DUE IN LATE 1979 WOULD BE UNABLE TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICTING INTERESTS INVOLVED. CONSULTANTS CONSIDER THE PLANTS ECONOMICAL BY ALL COSTING FACTORS, INCLUDING THE NIGER NAVIGATION PROJECTS OF INTEREST TO THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS. THE LOKOJA AND MAKURDI DAMS WOULD BE DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE SHIPPING NEEDS FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE AND WOULD LARGELY ELIMINATE THE LARGE SEASONAL VARIATION IN THE RIVERS' FLOW, THE SOURCE SAYS.
 - B. AS MENTIONED ABOVE, THE 750 MEGAWATT THERMAL ELECTRICITY

PLANT CONTEMPLATED FOR LAGOS MAY BE SITED ON THE NORTH SHORE OF LAGOS LAGOON SOUTHEAST OF IKORODU. SOME THOUGHT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO MERELY DUPLICATING THE SAPELE PLANT AT LAGO TO ELIMINATE DESIGN EXPENSE. NEPA HAS ORDERED STUDIES FOR A GAS LINE FROM THE OIL-GAS FIELDS IN SOUTHEAST NIGERIA. CONSIDERABLE ASSISTANCE IN THIS PROJECT IS HOPE FOR FROM THE WORLD BANK.

C. THE DIRECT REDUCTION STEEL MILL FOR WHICH GROUND HAS BEEN CLEARED AT WARRI, BENDEL STATE, MAY HAVE AN INDEPENDENT GAS-FIRED POWER SOURCE IF NEPA ACCEPTS A RECOMMENDATION THAT THE PLANT NO RPT NOT SIMPLY DRAW ON TWO ADDITIONAL UNITS WHICH WOULD BE ADDED TO THE SAPELE POWER PLANT UNDER AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL. SOME NEPA ADVISORS BELIEVE THE LATTER ALTERNATIVE WOULD DISRUPT THE SAPELE GRID TOO MUCH.

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